Public Schools and Advanced Education

Yukon Department of Education

January 2009

Office of the Auditor General of Canada
Bureau du vérificateur général du Canada

All of the audit work in this report was conducted in accordance with the standards for assurance engagements set by The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. While the Office adopts these standards as the minimum requirement for our audits, we also draw upon the standards and practices of other disciplines.

Ce document est également publié en français.

Auditor General of Canada
Vérificatrice générale du Canada

To the Honourable Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly:

I have the honour to transmit herewith my report on Public Schools and Advanced Education—Department of Education to the Yukon Legislative Assembly in accordance with the provisions of section 35 of the *Yukon Act*.

Sheila Fraser

Sheila Fraser, FCA
Auditor General of Canada

OTTAWA, 30 January 2009

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Public Schools and Advanced Education

Yukon Department of Education

Main Points

What we examined

The Yukon Department of Education is responsible for delivering accessible public education to students in elementary and secondary schools. It also provides advanced education, training, and employment services to prepare Yukoners for the labour force. In 2007–08, the Department spent $94 million on elementary and secondary (public school) education and $28 million on advanced education activities.

We examined whether the Department plans and delivers its programs in a way that helps Yukon children achieve success in elementary and secondary school and make a successful transition to further education. In addition, we looked at how the Department allocates teaching-based staff. We also looked at the coordination and reporting mechanisms between the Department and Yukon College, which is funded by the Department.

Why it's important

Education is vital to the progress of both individuals and Yukon as a whole. It lays the foundations for success in school, at work, and throughout life and directly benefits the economy, society, and individual quality of life. Well-educated citizens are better able to meet the demands of a modern economy, and are more likely to become productive, healthy, and participating members of society.

What we found

- The Department does not regularly analyze relevant data to identify, report, and address critical gaps in student performance. For example, data from Statistics Canada shows that for the period ended 2005–06, Yukon had the third lowest five-year average graduation rate in Canada, and the Department's own data indicates there is a large gap in graduation rates between First Nations students and other Yukon students. The Department has developed no comprehensive action plans, including targets, to address the underlying causes.
- The Department is unable to demonstrate that it successfully prepares students to make an effective transition from high school to post-secondary education, which includes training in trades.

The Department does not track the progress of its students to post-secondary education.

- The Department has neither a human resources plan nor a staffing needs profile in place, even though student enrolment has declined 8 percent over the past five years while the number of teachers increased by 4 percent and other teaching staff increased by 14 percent. This means the Department lacks a complete picture of the teaching and school-based resources it will need if enrolment continues to decline.
- The Department has no long-term master plan to ensure that it is managing school facilities effectively and preparing for significant challenges, such as the number of schools that are aging and in need of repair. At the same time, vacancy rates are high—in Whitehorse schools alone, student enrolment for 2007–08 was 3,879 and almost as many seats were vacant. Without a facilities management plan that considers the condition and capacity of each school, it is difficult for the Department to plan for maintenance, repairs, and improvements where they are most needed.
- The Department does not have a long-term strategic plan for managing challenges such as aging schools and declining enrolment. The lack of such a long-term plan with specific, measurable goals makes it difficult for the Department to track whether it is making optimal use of its resources and progressing toward its objectives. Nor does it have a risk-management plan to formally identify each risk that could impede its achievement of objectives—for example, demographic change and the impact of land claims settlements—and how the Department plans to manage the risk.

The Department and Yukon College have responded. *The Department and the College agree with our recommendations. Their detailed responses follow each recommendation throughout the Report.*

Introduction

1. Constitutional responsibility for education is assigned to the provincial and territorial governments. Provincial and territorial departments or ministries of education organize, deliver, and assess education at the elementary and secondary levels.

2. The Yukon *Education Act* was passed in 1990. The Act was amended in 2002 to remove the staff relations sections and place them in a new act now known as the *Education Labour Relations Act*.

The Department's mandate and operations

3. The mandate of the Yukon Department of Education is to deliver accessible and quality education to all Yukon students. Its primary responsibilities are to provide a public education system for Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12), to support adult education, and to encourage lifelong learning.

4. The *Education Act* states that the Department of Education will

- provide quality education to meet the needs of individual students "based on equality of educational opportunity";
- encourage greater public participation in the education system; and
- encourage students to become productive, responsible, and self-reliant members in a Yukon, Canadian, and global society.

5. These long-term goals all reinforce the Department's vision—for all Yukon people to possess

- a desire for and appreciation of lifelong learning;
- a strong commitment to their communities; and
- the knowledge and skills needed to live meaningful, productive, and rewarding lives.

6. To address the second goal of achieving greater public participation, the *Education Act* provides a forum for community involvement in education through school boards, school councils, and school committees. Yukon has one school board, twenty-six school councils (with some, but not all, powers of a Board), and one school committee. It is important to note that the Yukon Department of Education has more direct control over elements of education than departments of Education in other provinces have. The Yukon Department of Education is directly responsible for schools and

the employment of teachers; in provinces, these responsibilities belong to the school boards.

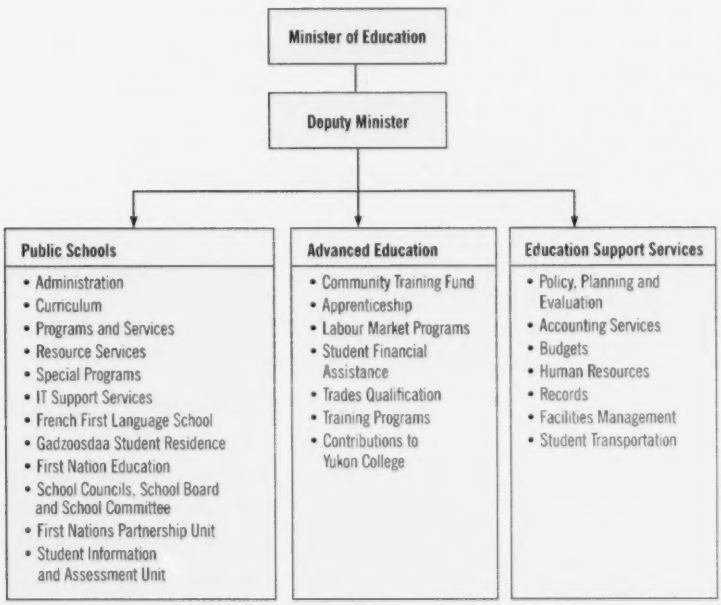
7. With a total of $137 million in expenses in the 2007–08 fiscal year, the Department carried out its operations through three branches: Public Schools, Advanced Education, and Education Support Services (Exhibit 1).

8. **Public Schools Branch.** The Department currently operates 28 public schools, with 4,964 students, across Yukon. The Public Schools Branch spent $94 million in the 2007–08 fiscal year. It is responsible for providing primary, intermediate, and secondary education as well as programs for Yukon First Nations, French Language, Special Needs, Home Education, and Distance Education. The Yukon curriculum is based on that of British Columbia. However, the Department has made minor modifications to the curriculum to reflect local needs, conditions, and opportunities. Examples include **experiential education**, literacy and numeracy initiatives, and cultural programs.

Experiential education—Includes practical hands-on experience as part of the learning process in classroom, schoolyard, and outdoor settings (for example, camping, hunting, outdoor science).

Exhibit 1 The operations of the Yukon Departmental of Education are carried out by three branches

Yukon Department of Education organizational chart



9. **Advanced Education Branch.** The Advanced Education Branch spent $28 million in the 2007–08 fiscal year. It administers, promotes, and supports adult training and education and labour force development. The Branch's stated goal is to help young people shift into work or post-secondary education by providing student financial assistance and employment and training programs. The Branch also provides funding to Yukon College and community training funding to various third parties for local training needs. While Yukon does not have its own university, the Department provides financial assistance to Yukon students who attend university elsewhere in Canada.

10. **Education Support Services Branch.** The Education Support Services Branch spent $15 million in the 2007–08 fiscal year. It develops departmental policies and provides financial and human resources and general administrative support services.

First Nations education in Yukon

First Nations—A term that refers to Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and non-Status.

11. Yukon is home to 14 **First Nations** who make up about 25 percent of the Yukon population. In the late 19th century, missionaries, with financial support from the federal government, introduced Western schooling to Yukon First Nations. At the time, the *Indian Act* empowered the federal government to provide for the education of Status Indian children in schools.

Status Indian—A term commonly applied to a person who is registered as an Indian under the *Indian Act*.

12. Responsibility for the education of **Status Indian** children was transferred to the Government of Yukon in 1951. When the last Indian residential school in Yukon closed, in the late 1960s, the Government of Yukon introduced a new integration policy for education.

13. In 2005, the Government of Yukon and Council of Yukon First Nations jointly created the Education Reform Project to improve learning opportunities and recommend changes to the education system. In February 2008, after three years of consultations, the Education Reform Project produced a report that covered 35 issues and made 207 recommendations. Overall, its recommendations are intended to reduce the educational gap between First Nations and other students. The report noted that many First Nations want to preserve their language and culture, while ensuring that their children succeed in mainstream society. Officials from the Department stated that they plan to address some of the recommendations with New Horizons, which was announced as part of a new education strategy in Yukon's Budget 2008–2009.

14. In 2006, the Department established the First Nations Programs and Partnerships (FNPP) unit within the Public Schools Branch. The goals of the FNPP unit are to build productive relationships with First Nations communities, improve results of First Nations students, and support a higher degree of cultural inclusion in schools. In addition to First Nations languages, the Department is implementing new First Nations Yukon-specific curriculums through the FNPP unit. Some First Nations courses are being pilot tested, but it is too early to evaluate their success.

Focus of the audit

15. Our objectives were to determine whether the Department could demonstrate that it effectively delivers public school programs to Yukon children and that it has a comprehensive action plan in place to address any performance gaps and to successfully prepare young adults to pursue further education. We also examined whether the Department could demonstrate that it incorporates adequate strategic planning in the delivery of education and that it has a reasonable process for allocating teaching resources based on need.

16. More details on the audit objectives, scope, approach, and criteria are in **About the Audit** at the end of this report.

Observations and Recommendations

Public schools

17. To determine whether the Department of Education appropriately assesses its effectiveness in delivering education to Yukon children, we examined the primary processes the Department used to measure Yukon student performance during the fiscal years 2001–02 to 2007–08.

Better identification, analysis, and reporting of student performance results and appropriate corrective plans are needed

18. We expected the Department to be able to identify performance indicators and measure performance results for both Yukon students as a whole and for major student sub-groups, such as First Nations students. Setting meaningful performance indicators (for example, results of standardized tests and graduation rates) and monitoring student performance are key ways for the Department to assess the effectiveness of its programs, services, and polices. We also expected the Department to establish goals, set targets, and benchmark results

to similar jurisdictions. Finally, we expected the Department to monitor and report actual results, then address gaps and work toward continuous improvement.

19. The Student Information and Assessment Unit, which currently has one staff member who has been in the position for less than one year, is responsible for

- coordinating standardized examinations,
- managing the Student Information Management System (SIMS),
- compiling public schools reporting and data analysis, and
- issuing student transcripts and graduation certificates.

20. **Standardized Tests.** The Department administers two sets of standardized tests to Yukon students to measure and benchmark the performance of Yukon students, both within the territory and compared to other jurisdictions. These tests are intended to provide objective, consistent, system-wide measures of student achievement and growth:

- **Yukon Achievement Tests (YAT).** These tests cover language arts and math and are given to students in grades 3, 6, and 9. The Department uses the same tests as the Province of Alberta and compares Yukon students' results to those of Alberta students.
- **British Columbia Provincial Exams (BCPE).** These exams cover a variety of subjects and are given to students in grades 10, 11, and 12. The Department uses the same tests as the Province of British Columbia (BC) and compares Yukon students' results to those of BC students.

21. The Department has identified two performance targets, against which it measures standardized test results:

- 85 percent of students demonstrate "successful" performance by achieving 50 percent or more on standardized tests, and
- 20 percent of students demonstrate "excellent" performance by achieving 80 percent or more on standardized tests.

22. In the 2006–07 fiscal year, the Department compared the results of the YATs and BCPEs in a total of 20 subject areas to its performance targets. These targets were met in only 6 of the 20 subject areas.

23. We found that, although the Department identified and reported performance gaps in standardized test results, it did not define how

large a gap would have to be to warrant corrective action. For example, for the 2006–07 fiscal year, the Department's Annual Report shows that, when average test score results are compared, there are negative gaps between students in Yukon and those in BC and Alberta: from one to six percent on YATs and from two to seven percent on BCPEs. Some BCPE results did show positive gaps, where Yukon students scored higher than BC students. The Annual Report does not mention whether the Department considers the negative gaps to be significant or whether any corrective action was taken to address them.

24. For internal management purposes, the Department made some general observations and suggestions based on a summary of test results (by school) on the YATs. A similar document is not produced for performance gaps they have noted with the BC Provincial Exam results. The Department's YAT summaries are circulated to teachers and principals. However, we found that they provide similar advice from year-to-year, include only a few general observations and suggestions, and do not reflect an in-depth diagnosis. In cases where the Department did recommend corrective action, it did not develop an action plan or determine whether any of its actions had a measureable effect on test scores or closed the performance gaps.

25. Departmental data showed negative performance gaps on standardized YAT average test scores between First Nations students and other students in Yukon. In the 2006–07 fiscal year, these gaps ranged from 11 to 21 percent. We found that, although the Department identified and reported the gaps in the YAT results for First Nations students in its Annual Report, it did not report the gaps in the BCPE results. However, in 2006–07, internal departmental data indicated that these gaps ranged from zero to 30 percent. In addition, the Department has not specified how significant a gap needs to be to warrant corrective action.

26. Yukon students also participated in the 2007 Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP). The PCAP was developed to assess the performance of students across Canada in reading, mathematics, and science, and it is administered nationally to students by the **Council of Ministers of Education, Canada**. According to the 2007 PCAP report on the assessment of 13-year-olds (PCAP-13), Yukon scored the lowest in the country in science and second lowest in math. Yukon students fared better in reading comprehension, but still lagged behind the national average. Yukon was the only territory to participate in the assessment.

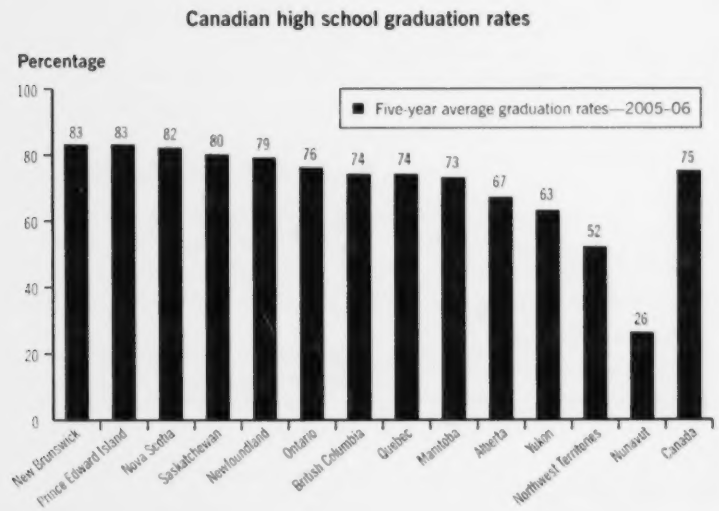
The **Council of Ministers of Education, Canada** was formed in 1967 to provide a framework to allow territorial and provincial education departments to work together, to represent Canada at international education-related events, and to liaise with federal government departments.

27. **Graduation rates.** Graduation from Grade 12 allows students to better prepare for life and work in society. We found that the Department does not benchmark graduation results for students in Yukon against those in other similar jurisdictions. In addition, the Department does not set a target graduation rate for Yukon students as a whole or for significant sub-groups, such as First Nations students.

28. For example, the graduation rates of other relevant jurisdictions in Canada could be used to establish a target graduation rate for Yukon. When we summarized data from Statistics Canada, we found that the five-year averages for the secondary school graduation rates across Canada was 75 percent and the five-year average graduation rate for Yukon was 63 percent, which is the third lowest rate in Canada (Exhibit 2).

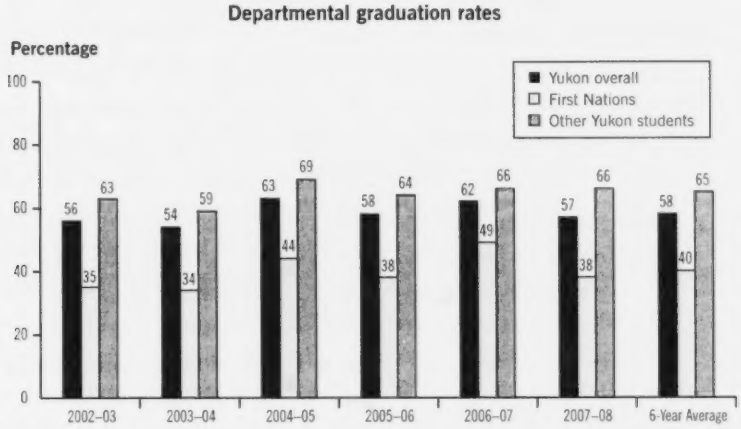
29. Based on unpublished data from its Student Information Management System (SIMS), the Department calculates a six-year completion graduation rate, which is a different method from that used by Statistics Canada. According to SIMS, the graduation rate for First Nations students is approximately 40 percent and the graduation rate for other Yukon students is just over 65 percent (Exhibit 3). Such relevant information should be considered in setting target graduation rates for performance measurement purposes.

Exhibit 2 Statistics Canada data indicates that Yukon students have the third lowest graduation rate in Canada



Source: Based on information in the Statistcs Canada Summary Public School Indicators Report for 2005–06. We calculated a five-year average from Statistics Canada's annual results (unaudited).

Exhibit 3 Department of Education data indicates that First Nations students have lower graduation rates than those of other Yukon students



Source: Six-Year Completion Rates (SIMS), Yukon Department of Education. We produced the chart from departmental data (unaudited).

30. We found that the Department does not specify how large a gap in graduation rates must be before it is considered significant, and it does not analyze root causes or prepare action plans with corrective measures to help close the gaps.

31. We noted that the graduation rates published in the Department's Annual Report are expressed as percentages of the **potential to graduate**. We calculated a five-year average potential to graduate based on the data in the Department's Annual Report. This produced a five-year graduation average of 92 percent for Yukon students as a whole and 89 percent for First Nations students. This is significantly higher than the actual graduation rates based on data in the Department's Student Information Management System (58 percent for Yukon students as a whole and 40 percent for First Nations students), making the rates published in the Department's Annual Report misleading.

Potential to graduate—Students entering grade 12 who are registered in appropriate courses to allow them to graduate when they successfully complete those courses.

The Department needs to analyze more information on student sub-groups and performance issues

32. The Department could use available performance data or collect other data to help it assess educational effectiveness within the Yukon. Information on student subgroups would allow the Department to determine if it has the right programs and supports in place to enable every learner to succeed. We found that the Department does not

adequately gather relevant data; measure performance gaps; develop action plans; or report the standardized test results of major student sub-groups, such as First Nations, Special Education, Individual Education Program, and at-risk students. The only results included in the Department's Annual Report are the YAT results for First Nations students. More analysis of the following areas would help the Department to assess educational effectiveness.

33. **Individual education program.** Student success is affected by many factors, including economic, social, and health factors and the education system itself. A student with learning difficulties, with written consent of a parent, is placed on an individual education program (IEP). In the 2007–08 fiscal year, 866 students (17 percent of all students in the Yukon) were on an IEP.

34. We found that the Department does not formally measure progress of students against their IEPs and that only 17 percent of IEP students wrote standardized tests in the 2007–08 fiscal year. As a result, the Department does not have an established basis for assessing progress. In addition, the Department follows the BC Ministry of Education policy, which states that, in order to graduate, students are required to write five standardized BCPE tests: Language Arts 10, Science 10, Math 10, Language Arts 12, and either Social Studies 11 or Social Studies 12. Because those who do not write these required exams cannot receive a graduation diploma, there is an impact on graduation rates.

At-risk students—Those who, due to a number of factors, find it a challenge to become and remain engaged in their learning and who require specific interventions to become successful learners.

35. **At-risk students.** The Department has a variety of initiatives to help **at-risk students** succeed, including

- an Individual Learning Centre alternative school,
- life skills and education outreach programs,
- teen parent programs, and
- youth offender programs for older students.

36. The Department produces an annual Kindergarten Screening Profile Report for younger students. The purpose of the screening profile is to identify students who may have problems with literacy or numeracy in Grade One. The 2006–07 Kindergarten Screening Profile Report stated that 34 percent of students in Yukon fell into an at-risk category.

37. We found that the Department does not know the drop-out rate for these students, and has not set a target for reducing the drop-out rates of at-risk students. As a result, the Department cannot

demonstrate if at-risk students have the proper programs and supports in place and whether these programs are effective.

38. **Absenteeism.** Student achievement can be adversely affected by absenteeism, but we found that the Department has not set a target or developed an action plan for improving attendance rates. During the past five years, absenteeism has increased 31 percent for all students—from an average of 16 days to an average of 21 days per student. Absenteeism is higher for rural students and First Nation students. Departmental officials told us that the number of at-risk students entering the K-12 system and the increasing absenteeism will have a direct impact on both standardized test results and graduation rates.

39. **Recommendation.** The Department of Education should

- establish performance targets for Yukon students overall and, to the extent possible, for each major student sub-group;
- determine what performance data it needs to gather;
- analyze data to identify critical trends and significant performance gaps;
- develop comprehensive action plans for significant gaps and relevant sub-groups; and
- present, in its annual report, the critical trends, significant performance gaps, and the results of actions taken to improve performance.

The Department's response. *Agreed.*

The Department is reviewing a new data collection and student information system that will facilitate the management and tracking of performance data, student information and reporting.

The Department is in the process of developing a Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K–12) assessment framework that will assist in the analysis of critical trends and performance gaps.

Advanced education

40. The 2008–09 Annual Department Plan identified its main Advanced Education goal as "enhancing transitions between different levels of education, training, and the world of work" and increasing post-secondary opportunities for Yukon students.

41. Yukon College is funded by the Department of Education. For the year ended 30 June 2007, the Department gave the College $14.9 million in funding and $2.5 million in free services, including building facilities. The core funding agreement and the letter of

understanding between the Minister of Education and Yukon College define the accountability and reporting relationships of the Minister, the Department, and the College.

42. Yukon College is the only post-secondary education institution in Yukon. In the 2007–08 fiscal year, it had 511 full-time and 4,649 part-time students. Yukon College has three divisions:

- The Professional Studies Division offers programs in Business, Health and Human Services, and Trades and Technology.
- The Arts and Science Division offers first and second year university-level classes for students working toward a university degree or a certificate or diploma from Yukon College.
- The Developmental Studies Division offers students college and career preparation and adult basic education classes, so they can complete high school level courses they will need to pursue post-secondary education, including education in trades and apprenticeships.

The Department needs to assess the effectiveness of student transitions from public schools to post-secondary education

43. We examined the Department's transition programs and processes. We expected that the Department would be able to demonstrate that it effectively facilitates the shift of students from public school to post-secondary education, including education in trades and apprenticeships. This is important, because Yukon needs skilled and educated workers in order to maintain a strong economy.

44. We interviewed Department and Yukon College staff, as well as third-party stakeholders. We reviewed departmental data and reports, programs and guidelines, third-party reports, minutes, legislation, and Yukon College data and reports.

45. **Post-secondary results.** Tracking students' progress after they leave public schools can help the Department assess whether the public school system has adequately prepared students for post-secondary education and employment.

46. We found that the Department does not identify or collect data that would help it identify whether students are successfully making the shift from public schools into post-secondary education (including training in the trades and adult education) or employment (including apprenticeships). Tracking students after Grade 12 can be difficult, since some students leave Yukon to work or for

post-secondary education. Nevertheless, having former students complete college programs and/or university degrees can be viewed as key measures of success for the public education system. Tracking student progress in post-secondary education would allow the Department to determine whether it is helping them make the transition from the public school system to post-secondary education.

47. Recommendation. The Department of Education should investigate the feasibility of tracking the progress of its students in employment and in post-secondary education. This would allow it to monitor the success of its programs and policies aimed at helping students make the transition from public school to post-secondary education and the workforce.

The Department's response. *Agreed.*

The Department will continue discussions with Yukon Bureau of Statistics and Yukon College to investigate the possibility of monitoring the progress of its students in both employment and post-secondary education. This is anticipated to be complete by the end of the 2009–10 fiscal year.

48. Coordination with Yukon College. While the Department does not track students after they have left the public school system, we found that, in 2006–07, according to the College's data, 32 percent of full-time Yukon College students were registered in Developmental Studies. Students register in Developmental Studies if they

- lack basic literacy and numeracy skills,
- did not complete high school, or
- need to upgrade their education to access post-secondary education and training.

49. We found that Yukon College does not track the progress of Developmental Studies students. While data on these students is available, no reports have been generated or analyzed to determine how long it takes students to complete the Developmental Studies program or whether they go on to complete regular college or post-secondary courses. In addition, the College does not compare its data with similar institutions or establish baseline data.

50. Recommendation. The Department of Education needs to coordinate their efforts with Yukon College to identify and, to the extent possible, address the root causes that lead to a lack of student readiness for the shift between high school and post-secondary education.

The Department's response. *Agreed.*

The Department has met with Yukon College to commence discussions regarding student readiness and the potential for working collaboratively in response to the "One Vision, Multiple Pathways—Secondary School Programming Process" Final Report. The report recommends greater flexibility in programming and further enhancement to the development of individual program plans leading to graduation and the transition to post-secondary or trades programming.

Yukon College's response. *The College agrees with this recommendation. The College and Department have already established a committee to study this area.*

51. Recommendation. Yukon College should report on the progress of the students registered in its Developmental Studies program to help assess the program's success.

Yukon College's response. *The College supports this recommendation and will put forward an appropriate action plan for Developmental Studies students.*

Yukon College needs to establish measures and report on its performance

52. We also examined Yukon College's reporting and accountability processes. We expected that the mandate, roles, and responsibilities of Yukon College would be clearly defined. We reviewed Yukon College's Annual Report as well as its Budget, audited financial statements, and annual enrolment statistics. We also reviewed a Letter of Understanding between the Minister of Education and Yukon College.

53. The Letter of Understanding between the Minister and Yukon College requires the College to submit a three-year Program and Service Plan and annual plans to the Minister. In addition, the College must report its strategic goals, its success in fulfilling these goals, and any of its other achievements.

54. The Letter also provides an opportunity for the Deputy Minister, acting on behalf of the Minister, to review the College's three-year Program Service Plan and its Annual Plan. We expected these plans to include strategic objectives for each of the College's programs as well as the resources, budgets, timelines, and program delivery methods that will be used to achieve those objectives. However, we found that the College's practice has been to use its financial budget as its annual plan. The financial budget contains few elements of an annual plan.

55. Yukon College reports to the Minister through its Annual Report, its audited financial statements, and through its annual enrolment statistics. We expected that the College would include its goals, objectives, and targets in its Annual Report. However, we found that, because the College has not established specific performance measures, its Annual Report does not include progress towards achieving strategic goals. We found that while the mandate, roles, and responsibilities of the College have been defined, the accountability and reporting relationship between Yukon College and the Minister could be strengthened.

56. **Recommendation.** Yukon College should establish performance measures that include specific targets and expectations. It should also report to the Minister and to Yukoners the progress it has made to meet those targets and expectations and the results of actions it has taken.

Yukon College's response. *The College agrees that an accountability framework, which will include performance measures, will be developed and implemented to satisfy the government's need for accountability and transparency. The Strategic Plan 2008–2013 with its six strategic directions, 22 objectives, and 54 outcomes forms the foundation of such a reporting relationship. The action plan approved by the College Board (at its 12 and 13 December 2008 Board meeting) addresses the outcomes and monitors progress on a regular basis.*

A Community Training Fund strategy is needed

57. The Community Training Fund is an initiative to help address Yukoners' training needs. The fund supports projects in trades and technology, literacy, basic job skills development, and heritage. These projects are intended to help Yukoners prepare for economic developments and employment opportunities in a changing job market.

Contributions—Conditional transfer payments made to individuals or organizations that are based on a contribution agreement and are subject to audit and reporting requirements.

58. Community Training Fund **contributions** allow communities to design and implement training that targets job opportunities in their regions. Contributions can be directed to specific communities or industries, by providing training projects that help the private sector meet its needs for skilled workers. The Department has short- and long-term Community Training Fund contribution agreements with about 40 community organizations. In the 2007–08 fiscal year, it administered agreements that totalled about $1.4 million.

59. We expected that the Department would have a clearly articulated strategy for allocating community training funds, conduct regular program reviews, and closely monitor community training funds to ensure that they are spent according to the contribution agreements.

60. We found that the Department was unable to demonstrate that it has a comprehensive strategy for allocating these funds or that it had completed reviews to determine whether the funds were spent effectively, economically, and efficiently. The most recent Yukon Training Strategy was prepared in 1998 and has not been updated since.

61. We examined the monitoring process for 20 Community Training Fund contribution agreements. These agreements require the funded organizations to provide the Department with various financial and project reports. We found that in some cases, the terms and conditions and the reporting requirements were not clearly defined, which makes it difficult to monitor compliance. The Department has not followed up on missing, incomplete, or erroneous reports.

62. **Recommendation.** The Department of Education should develop a comprehensive strategy for managing community training funds. Contribution agreements should have clear terms and conditions and should be properly reviewed, managed, and monitored.

The Department's response. *Agreed.*

The Department, in consultation with stakeholders, is developing a ten-year training strategy that will address coordinating training needs and training programs, as well as addressing training gaps for the next ten years. This strategy, which will include an action plan and evaluation component, will address the shortcomings associated with the current deficiencies in the management of the community training funds, including the monitoring process.

Beginning in July 2007, new monitoring systems have been implemented to monitor all contribution agreements.

Education support services

The Department needs to improve its planning processes and practices

63. Strategic planning is a management tool that focuses on the future. It helps a department set priorities and goals and develop a plan to meet those goals. It also helps a department to assess how resources are to be allocated and gives it the scope to adjust its direction in response to a changing environment.

64. We expected the Yukon Department of Education to have a comprehensive strategic plan in place, with clearly defined directions and specific, measurable goals and objectives. As part of the strategic planning process, we also expected the Department to have identified, measured, mitigated, and reported significant risks to achieving its goals and objectives.

65. Furthermore, we expected that the Department would have focused plans for managing its key resources, such as human and physical resources, as well as plans for individual schools. These plans would be linked to and consistent with the Department's overall strategic plan.

66. **Comprehensive strategic planning.** The Government of Yukon's Financial Administration Manual requires each department to have a strategic plan to guide its activities and facilitate accountability, by measuring actual outcomes against plans. The Department must be able to collect, analyze, and interpret data in order to effectively manage its activities and to be able to measure performance in a variety of areas. Goal setting and results measurement are also crucial in determining whether the Department is achieving its goals and delivering its mandate under the *Education Act*.

Main Estimates—The Government of Yukon's Budget, which is a formal financial plan that

- reflects the Government's objectives,
- discloses the amount and sources of funds the Government will receive and the proposed expenditures of the Government, and
- provides a basis for authorizing expenditures and provides a framework for monitoring and evaluating performance.

67. We examined the Department's short- and long-term plans and planning processes. Its annual Department Plan presents strategic goals, objectives, activities, vision, mandate, responsibilities, and values. In addition, its **Main Estimates** documents include departmental and program objectives. We examined the harmonization of its key planning documents.

68. We found that not all of the objectives in the Department's various key planning documents agree. Furthermore, in its Annual Report, the Department does not report on how well the objectives from previous reports were achieved. We also found that the Department has a five-year **capital plan**, but the rest of its resources are planned on an annual basis. Financial reporting for budget and actual expenditures are shown in the Department's annual Main Estimates, in its monthly financial reports and in the Government of Yukon's Public Accounts.

Capital plan—A five-year plan for maintaining physical assets, such as buildings, land, vehicles, equipment, computer, and leasehold improvements.

69. While the Department of Education has elements of a strategic plan in various documents, taken as a whole, the Department does not have a comprehensive long-term strategic plan.

70. Recommendation. The Department of Education should develop a long-term strategic plan that includes clearly defined directions and specific measurable goals and objectives.

The Department's response. *Agreed.*

The Department currently follows the Government of Yukon's Department Planning process. The Department revised the 2007–08 Annual Report to better align the Department's strategic goals, objectives, and mandate. The Department will continue to expand the current Department Plan to include relevant performance indicators and to continue the ongoing alignment of resources to the Department's strategic goal and mandate.

Risk management—Practices that a department uses to manage the uncertainty of future events and the potential impact of the identified risks.

71. Risk identification and management. We examined the Department's **risk management**, and we expected that the Department would be able to demonstrate that it identifies, measures, mitigates, and reports significant risks. Risk management is important, because it helps a department keep risks within a level appropriate to the nature of its operations.

72. Although the Department identifies risks on an ad hoc basis, it does not have an integrated risk-management plan. Since it does not formally identify risks, it is difficult to determine whether the Department is aware of all the critical and potential risks that need to be managed. Examples of the kinds of risks that can affect the Department's ability to achieve its mandate and objectives include, but are not limited to

- demographic changes;
- enrolment changes;
- deficiencies in information needed for decision-making;
- personnel changes;
- aging facilities;
- political and legislative changes;
- social and economic issues;
- the impact of land claim settlements; and
- environmental, health, and safety impacts.

73. Some risks can have a significant impact on the Department's operation. For example, land claim settlements and self-government agreements could have a profound impact on the jurisdiction over education for First Nations.

74. Today, 11 of Yukon's 14 First Nations have self-government agreements. These First Nations have the right to deliver education services for their citizens and can negotiate how to divide and share responsibility for the design, delivery, and administration of programs—including education—delivered within their traditional territory. Several First Nations in Yukon have served notice that they wish to negotiate program and services transfer agreements for education. This could have an impact on student enrolment in the Department's schools, particularly in rural areas.

75. Overall, we did not find a risk assessment that specifies each risk, its potential impact, and how the Department plans to manage the risk. We found that the Department mitigates risks as they arise, but does not mitigate or report risks in a comprehensive, proactive fashion. This means that the Department does not know if it has adequately addressed all of the key risks of delivering education programs and services and whether it is allocating resources to the right areas.

76. **Recommendation.** As part of the strategic planning process, the Department of Education should develop an integrated risk-management plan that identifies and assesses the key risks the Department faces and the measures it will use to mitigate these risks. This information should be communicated to relevant staff so that there is an ongoing effort to identify, manage, and report key risks.

The Department's response. *Agreed.*

The Department of Education will continue discussions with partners in education and relevant Government of Yukon departments to identify what risks are inherent in education and what measures are required to mitigate these risks. This information will be used to develop a comprehensive risk-management plan. A summary of the risk management plan will be included in the Department's Annual Report, under a new section entitled "Environmental Scan."

The collaborative risk-management project underway with the Department of Highways and Public Works (with Executive Council Office assistance) will help form the framework and content of future assessments.

77. **Individual School Plans.** The *Education Act* defines a school plan as a plan prepared for each school by the school administration. It should contain school objectives, educational priorities, courses of study by grade, evaluation procedures, recommended budget and staffing requirements, and other information required for the effective functioning of a school. Teachers and principals have the right to be part of developing the school plan. School Boards and Councils may

review, modify, and approve the school plan. The *Education Act* does not state how often a school plan should be prepared or what the review and feedback processes should be.

78. We expected that the Department would be able to demonstrate transparency and accountability in the school planning process, including providing its feedback on school plans to the schools, school boards, and school councils.

79. We found that the Department did not have guidance on the overall purpose for school plans, including how they fit into the overall strategic planning process, and did not include information that explained roles, responsibilities, and reporting. The school plans we reviewed all identified school objectives, goals, and strategies. However, the scope and breadth of coverage in other important areas—such as school community relations, student evaluation and reporting, school budget synopsis, and emergency procedures—varied from school to school.

80. Although school plans are prepared annually, we found that the Department reviews the plans on an ad hoc basis. It did not review any school plans in the 2007–08 fiscal year and, in the 2006–07 fiscal year, it reviewed only 8 of the 28 school plans that were prepared. The Department provides limited feedback to schools, school boards, and school councils.

81. Recommendation. The Department of Education should develop a policy that lays out the specific purpose of school plans, expectations for their preparation including the link with the Department's strategic plan, the expected frequency of preparation of plans, and how school plan results should be reported. The policy should also incorporate review and feedback mechanisms.

The Department's response. *Agreed.*

The Department has been doing a form of school plans for many years. Prior to the Education Act of 1990, the process was referred to as accreditation. The process is now referred to as School Growth Planning. A draft policy has been developed and will be implemented in the spring of 2009. The new policy will better align the Department's strategic plan and will be linked to school growth plans in the 2010–11 school year. Growth Plans will continue to be submitted to the Department each year, prior to the end of June, and a three-year external review cycle will be implemented in the 2009–10 school year.

82. **Human resource planning.** Teaching resources include teachers and in-classroom paraprofessional staff, both full-time and part-time. School-based staff includes teaching staff, administrative staff (including principals and vice-principals), school counsellors, librarians, learning assistants, remedial tutors, aboriginal language teachers, and teachers of special education and gifted classes.

83. For the 2006–07 fiscal year, total Department salary costs were $67 million. Of this amount, $55 million was paid to 733 teaching resources in the 2006-07 school year (Exhibit 4). This accounts for 74 percent of the Public School Branch's budget.

Exhibit 4 Allocation of funds for teaching resources in the 2006-07 fiscal year

Teaching resources	Teaching positions	Salary allocation
Teachers	560	$47 million
Remedial tutors and learning assistants	144	$6 million
Aboriginal language teachers	29	$2 million
Total	**733**	**$55 million**

These categories include indeterminate and temporary staff.
Source: Compilation of Department's individual school costs and teacher evaluation spreadsheets

84. We expected the Department of Education to have managed its teaching resources to ensure that the appropriate number of teaching staff with the required skills and competencies were in place.

85. Human resource planning is a process that identifies current and future human resource needs for an organization to achieve its goals. It should link human resources management to the Department's overall strategic plan and objectives to ensure the Department's mandate is fulfilled both now and in the future.

86. We reviewed legislation, policies, procedures, and processes as well as departmental data, which included the staffing entitlement formula, financial reports, and teachers' evaluation reports. We also reviewed reports and practices from other provinces and territories in Canada.

87. We found that the Department has human resource policies and procedures in place, but does not have a comprehensive human resource plan to manage current and future human resource needs. Therefore, the Department cannot link staffing decisions, including overall staffing numbers and allocation decisions, to a comprehensive

human resource plan, which it will need to deal with issues like recruitment, retirement, and the retention of staff who possess the necessary skills.

88. The Department's need for a comprehensive human resource plan is underscored by the fact that the number of teaching resources in Yukon has increased, while the number of students has decreased. Between 2003 and 2007, there were four percent more teachers and fourteen percent more education assistants/remedial tutors, compared to eight percent fewer students in the Yukon. Our analysis of school age children in the population projections report issued by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics show that declining enrolment is expected to continue for at least the next five years.

89. Furthermore, the Statistics Canada Summary Public School Indicators Report for 2005–2006 shows that Yukon has the lowest student-**educator** ratio in Canada, with one educator for every eleven students. Based on this report, our calculations show that Yukon also has the lowest five-year average ratio in Canada of 11.7 to one. The average student-educator ratio for Canada over the past five years has been 15.5 to one.

Educators—All employees in the public school system (either school-based or school-district-based) who belong to one of the three following categories: teachers, school administrators, and pedagogical support.

Source: Statistics Canada

90. The Department's 2006–07 Annual Report notes that the low ratio has traditionally been associated with the need to staff rural schools based on programming requirements rather than on enrolment. However, the report also mentions that the steady decrease in the ratio from 1996 is largely related to declining enrolment.

91. The Department has not established a staffing needs profile that includes an assessment of staffing levels or an assessment of the skills needed for school-based staff. As a result, it may not have the appropriate number and mix of teaching resources, skills, and school-based staff needed for both the short- and long-term. We also found that the Department does not have strategies or action plans in place to fill staffing gaps.

92. **Recommendation.** The Department of Education should

- develop and implement a comprehensive human resources plan that clearly defines its current and future human resource needs and integrates them with its strategic plan, and
- develop an action plan or a strategy to deal with existing differences between current resources and short- and long-term staffing needs.

The Department's response. *Agreed.*

A comprehensive human resource plan will be developed and implemented, reflecting current and future human resource needs and supporting the Department's strategic plan.

Strategies will be developed to address gaps, between current resources and short-and long-term staffing needs, where identified.

93. Long-term facilities planning. As of 31 March 2008, the Department had total capital assets in excess of $200 million.

94. We examined the Department's long-term facility planning and review processes. We interviewed Department and Property Management Division staff and reviewed internal documents and reports, third-party reports, and legislation; regulations and standards; and federal and provincial publications and guidelines.

95. We expected that long-term planning for school facilities would exist, capital assets would be managed effectively, and capital and maintenance decisions would be based on a sound and rational process. We found that the Department does not have a current long-term master plan in place to effectively manage school facilities. The last long-term plan was effective from 1995 to 1999.

96. We examined departmental records and found that Yukon schools have an estimated lifespan of 40 years and that some schools are nearing the end of their estimated useful life. Seven schools have a remaining estimated lifespan of less than four years and four schools have a remaining estimated lifespan of less than nine years.

97. A key aspect of facility planning is the operating capacity of current facilities. We used one of the methods the Department uses for calculating capacity (multiplying the number of classrooms by the number of students allowed per classroom, under the collective agreement with the Yukon Teachers' Association). We found that, in 2008, 11 of the 14 schools in Whitehorse were operating at between 33 and 62 percent of their total capacity—resulting in 3,200 vacant seats. Actual student enrolment for Whitehorse schools for 2007–08 was 3,879.

98. We found that rural schools are operating at levels well below capacity. In 2008, rural schools operated at between 9 and 39 percent of their total capacity. Of the fourteen rural schools, three are within five years of replacement. The Department will need to consider the capacity of schools when it prepares a long-term master plan for its facilities and plans the size of replacement schools.

99. **Recommendation.** The Department of Education should work with the Property Management Division to develop a long-term facility plan that takes into account the age, capacity, and location of facilities and student enrolment trends.

The Department's response. *Agreed.*

The Department partners with Property Management Division (PMD) of the Department of Highways and Public Works on all facility infrastructure issues. PMD undertakes ongoing facility condition assessments and provides annual recommendations for capital maintenance improvements. The Yukon Department of Education and PMD work together to coordinate these annual capital maintenance plans. This process encompasses only a two-to three-year planning horizon.

Performance evaluations of teaching staff need to be completed on a timely basis

100. Periodic performance evaluations are important to ensure that teachers are competent and are getting timely feedback to improve their instruction to students. Evaluations are also required to ensure Departmental compliance with the *Education Act*, the *Education Labour Relations Act*, and its Teacher Evaluation Policy.

101. The Department has developed a draft version of *A Handbook for the Evaluation of School-based Teachers* in which it outlines the reasons for and main objectives of teacher performance evaluations. They include the following:

- develop and maintain a school environment that will maximize learning/teaching potential,
- reinforce strengths and overcome areas of weakness, and
- ensure system-wide efficiency and effectiveness through teamwork and collegiality.

102. We found that the Department does not carry out regular performance evaluations of teaching-based staff members. Current policy requires permanent employees to have an evaluation once every three years. Temporary employees are required to have an evaluation for each full year of teaching. New employees are required to have an evaluation once they have completed a full year. The information that the Department provided indicates the following, for teaching-based staff in the past five years:

- Twenty-six percent have a current evaluation.
- Fifty-four percent do not have a current evaluation.

- Twenty percent were employed for less than a year and, thus, were not yet required to have an evaluation.

103. **Recommendation.** The Department of Education should take the appropriate steps to ensure that teaching staff are evaluated on a timely basis, as required by the *Education Act*, the *Education Labour Relations Act*, and departmental policies.

The Department's response. *Agreed.*

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that teachers are evaluated or participate in Growth Plans by June 2011.

Comprehensive school facility audits need to be completed on a periodic basis

104. On behalf of the Yukon Department of Education, the Property Management Division (PMD) of the Department of Highways and Public Works carries out annual inspections and produces a five-year list of recommendations for capital upgrading of all departmental buildings. This report is produced based on input from all the maintainers of buildings. Department of Education officials told us that it is not a "building condition report," but can be used to identify weaknesses in buildings. The facilities agreement between the Department and PMD does not clearly define their roles and responsibilities.

105. It is critical that the Department be informed, on an ongoing basis, of the condition of each of its buildings. It needs to be aware of issues it may have to address relating to structural integrity, the safety of mechanical, electrical and other systems, and environmental conditions in school buildings (for example, those related to air quality, mould, and water). However, we found that neither the Department nor the PMD conduct regular, independent, comprehensive audits of school facilities.

106. We compared Yukon's requirements to British Columbia's. The BC Ministry of Education's Facility Audit Manual requires that the physical condition of existing public schools be evaluated every five years. We found that no similar requirement exists in Yukon. The manual also requires standardized building condition information, so it can effectively compare building types or functions. Capital planning in BC for renovation and replacement is to be based on these objectively-applied criteria.

107. Yukon, like BC, is in an earthquake (seismic activity) zone. BC school boards undertake seismic risk assessments to identify

seismic risk in their schools and prepare feasibility studies to identify the scope of required remediation. However, the Department could not demonstrate to us that seismic evaluations had been carried out in Yukon that respond to national changes to the building code that came into effect in 2005.

108. **Recommendation.** The Department of Education should work with the Property Management Division of the Department of Public Works and Highways to conduct regular and comprehensive facility audits to ensure that major building deficiencies are identified. The audits should address environmental, health, and safety issues, as needed.

The ***Department's response.*** *Agreed.*

The Property Management Division is undergoing a business process redesign, and among its key goals is the improvement of the Division's building audit function and the development of comprehensive service level agreements. In the interim, the Department of Education is undertaking independent assessments of all schools, on a system-by-system basis—roof audits have just been completed and structural/seismic and energy-management assessments are scheduled for the 2009–10 fiscal year.

The Department of Education will incorporate the results of building audits into the risk-management plan as the Department develops it.

Conclusion

109. The Yukon Department of Education could not demonstrate to us that it effectively delivers public school programs to Yukon children. We found that while the Department has established two key performance indicators and in some cases has measured and reported gaps in performance, they do not specify how large a gap in performance must be to warrant corrective action. We also found that, in most cases, they have not adequately analyzed root causes, prepared action plans, or taken corrective measures to help close the gaps.

110. The Department does not track students' progress after they leave the public school system to determine whether its transition programs and supports are successful. As a result, the Department cannot demonstrate that it successfully prepares young adults to pursue further education. The Department needs to coordinate its efforts with Yukon College to identify and address, to the extent possible, the root causes that lead to a lack of student readiness for the shift between high school and post-secondary education.

111. The Department does not incorporate adequate strategic planning in delivering education. It does not have a long-term strategic plan or formal integrated risk management process in place to proactively identify, mitigate, and report on risks. It needs these to help meet its mandate, goals, and objectives, and to allocate resources in the best possible way. The Department does not have a long-term master plan in place to ensure it is effectively managing school facilities.

112. There has been a decline in student enrolment. At the same time, the number of teachers and the number of learning assistants and remedial tutors has increased. We found that the Department has neither a comprehensive human resources plan nor a staffing needs profile in place. This is important if the Department wishes to have a complete picture of its recruitment needs for teaching and school-based resources in both the short- and long-term.

About the Audit

Objectives

Our objectives for the audit were to determine whether the Yukon Department of Education can demonstrate that it

- effectively delivers public school programs to Yukon children and has a comprehensive action plan in place to address any performance gaps,
- successfully prepares young adults to pursue further education,
- incorporates adequate strategic planning in delivering education,
- has a reasonable process to allocate teaching and school-based staff based on needs.

Scope and approach

Our audit focused on the Yukon Department of Education's Public Schools and Advanced Education branches. In particular, we examined some of the key processes and resources used to deliver education in Yukon. The audit mainly covered the 2001–02 to 2007–08 fiscal years.

We looked at the Department's monitoring, measurement, and reporting of program results. We interviewed Education managers and staff and reviewed relevant documents including reports, statistics, and information from the Department and other public sources. We examined relevant Management Board policies and decisions, Government of Yukon and Yukon Department of Education policy and procedures manuals and directives, internal and external reports, student information system numbers, consultant and third-party reports, and reports and guidance from other parts of Canada.

We visited three rural communities in Yukon to obtain audit evidence and interview key personnel. Our goals were to examine issues related to elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education and to seek their views on the risks and issues facing the Department.

We also interviewed external stakeholders and those responsible for education in other jurisdictions. Although we did not audit the activities carried out by these people and organizations, we sought their views on education in general and in Yukon.

Criteria

Listed below are the criteria that were used to conduct this audit and their sources.

Criteria	Sources
We expect that the Department of Education can identify performance indicators and measure results of overall Yukon as well as First Nations students. We also expect the Department to establish goals, set targets and benchmark to similar jurisdictions and monitor and report actual results—then address the gaps and work towards continuous improvement.	*Education Act*, Government of Yukon Department Annual Reports, Alberta Yukon Achievement Test result documentation, BC achievement test result documentation, Departmental Annual Plan, Departmental Student Information Management System data, Statistics Canada census data, and Statistics Canada and Council of Ministers of Education Pan-Canadian report test results
We expect that the Department can demonstrate that it effectively facilitates the transition of students from public schools to post-secondary education, including trades and apprenticeships.	*Education Act, Yukon College Act, Student Financial Assistance Act, Apprenticeship Training Act & Regulations,* departmental annual reports, Department student financial assistance data, Departmental Annual Plan, Yukon College annual reports, budget and financial statements, Yukon College enrolment data, Department and Yukon College agreements, programs and guidelines, and Statistics Canada census data
We expect that the Department can demonstrate it has a comprehensive strategic plan in place with clearly defined directions and specific measurable goals and objectives.	Government of Yukon Financial Administration Manual, Management Board Minutes, Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants publications, Departmental Annual Plans, and the Departmental Strategic Plan
We expect that the Department has adequately identified, measured, mitigated, and reported risks.	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat integrated risk management guide, Departmental Annual Plan, Department Risk Management Plan, and Ministerial briefing notes
We expect that the Department demonstrates transparency and accountability in the school planning process, including providing feedback.	*Education Act,* school plans, school plan evaluations, and school plan reporting
We expect that the Department to have planned for and to be managing its teaching resources to ensure that it has the appropriate number of teaching staff with the required skills and competencies at the right time and in the right place.	Government of Yukon Financial Administration Manual, Departmental polices and procedures, Department staffing entitlement formula, Departmental statistics and demographic data, Department Staff Evaluations data, Departmental Annual Reports, Pan Canadian Statistics Canada, and CMEC reports
We expect that long range planning for school facilities exist, capital assets are managed effectively, and capital and maintenance decisions are based on a sound, rational process.	Government of Yukon Financial Administration Manual, BC Ministry of Education capital planning best practice, Capital & O&M Variance reports, Capital Budget Report, Variance reports, inspection reports, and facility audits

Audit work completed

Audit work for this chapter was substantially completed on 10 October 2008.

Audit team

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Appendix List of recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations found in this Report. The number in front of the recommendation indicates the paragraph where it appears in the report. The numbers in parentheses indicate the paragraphs where the topic is discussed.

Recommendation	Response
Public schools	
39. The Department of Education should • establish performance targets for Yukon students overall and, to the extent possible, for each major student sub-group; • determine what performance data it needs to gather; • analyze data to identify critical trends and significant performance gaps; • develop comprehensive action plans for significant gaps and relevant sub-groups; and • present, in its annual report, the critical trends, significant performance gaps, and the results of actions taken to improve performance. **(17–38)**	Agreed. The Department is reviewing a new data collection and student information system that will facilitate the management and tracking of performance data, student information and reporting. The Department is in the process of developing a Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K–12) assessment framework that will assist in the analysis of critical trends and performance gaps.
Advanced education	
47. The Department of Education should investigate the feasibility of tracking the progress of its students in employment and in post-secondary education. This would allow it to monitor the success of its programs and policies aimed at helping students make the transition from public school to post-secondary education and the workforce. **(40–46)**	Agreed. The Department will continue discussions with Yukon Bureau of Statistics and Yukon College to investigate the possibility of monitoring the progress of its students in both employment and post-secondary education. This is anticipated to be complete by the end of the 2009–10 fiscal year.

Recommendation	Response
50. The Department of Education needs to coordinate their efforts with Yukon College to identify and, to the extent possible, address the root causes that lead to a lack of student readiness for the shift between high school and post-secondary education. **(48–49)**	**Department of Education's response.** Agreed. The Department has met with Yukon College to commence discussions regarding student readiness and the potential for working collaboratively in response to the "One Vision, Multiple Pathways—Secondary School Programming Process" Final Report. The report recommends greater flexibility in programming and further enhancement to the development of individual program plans leading to graduation and the transition to post-secondary or trades programming. **Yukon College's response.** The College agrees with this recommendation. The College and Department have already established a committee to study this area.
51. Yukon College should report on the progress of the students registered in its Developmental Studies program to help assess the program's success. **(48–49)**	**Yukon College's response.** The College supports this recommendation and will put forward an appropriate action plan for Developmental Studies students.
56. Yukon College should establish performance measures that include specific targets and expectations. It should also report to the Minister and to Yukoners the progress it has made to meet those targets and expectations and the results of actions it has taken. **(52–55)**	**Yukon College's response.** The College agrees that an accountability framework, which will include performance measures, will be developed and implemented to satisfy the government's need for accountability and transparency. The Strategic Plan 2008–2013 with its six strategic directions, 22 objectives, and 54 outcomes forms the foundation of such a reporting relationship. The action plan approved by the College Board (at its 12 and 13 December 2008 Board meeting) addresses the outcomes and monitors progress on a regular basis.
62. The Department of Education should develop a comprehensive strategy for managing community training funds. Contribution agreements should have clear terms and conditions and should be properly reviewed, managed, and monitored. **(57–61)**	**Department of Education's response.** Agreed. The Department, in consultation with stakeholders, is developing a ten-year training strategy that will address coordinating training needs and training programs, as well as addressing training gaps for the next ten years. This strategy, which will include an action plan and evaluation component, will address the shortcomings associated with the current deficiencies in the management of the community training funds, including the monitoring process. Beginning in July 2007, new monitoring systems have been implemented to monitor all contribution agreements.

Recommendation	Response
Education support services	
70. The Department of Education should develop a long-term strategic plan that includes clearly defined directions and specific measurable goals and objectives. **(63–69)**	Agreed. The Department currently follows the Government of Yukon's Department Planning process. The Department revised the 2007–08 Annual Report to better align the Department's strategic goals, objectives, and mandate. The Department will continue to expand the current Department Plan to include relevant performance indicators and to continue the ongoing alignment of resources to the Department's strategic goal and mandate.
76. As part of the strategic planning process, the Department of Education should develop an integrated risk-management plan that identifies and assesses the key risks the Department faces and the measures it will use to mitigate these risks. This information should be communicated to relevant staff so that there is an ongoing effort to identify, manage, and report key risks. **(71–75)**	Agreed. The Department of Education will continue discussions with partners in education and relevant Government of Yukon departments to identify what risks are inherent in education and what measures are required to mitigate these risks. This information will be used to develop a comprehensive risk-management plan. A summary of the risk management plan will be included in the Department's Annual Report, under a new section entitled "Environmental Scan." The collaborative risk-management project underway with the Department of Highways and Public Works (with Executive Council Office assistance) will help form the framework and content of future assessments.
81. The Department of Education should develop a policy that lays out the specific purpose of school plans, expectations for their preparation including the link with the Department's strategic plan, the expected frequency of preparation of plans, and how school plan results should be reported. The policy should also incorporate review and feedback mechanisms. **(77–80)**	Agreed. The Department has been doing a form of school plans for many years. Prior to the Education Act of 1990, the process was referred to as accreditation. The process is now referred to as School Growth Planning. A draft policy has been developed and will be implemented in the spring of 2009. The new policy will better align the Department's strategic plan and will be linked to school growth plans in the 2010–11 school year. Growth Plans will continue to be submitted to the Department each year, prior to the end of June, and a three-year external review cycle will be implemented in the 2009–10 school year.

Recommendation	Response
92. The Department of Education should • develop and implement a comprehensive human resources plan that clearly defines its current and future human resource needs and integrates them with its strategic plan, and • develop an action plan or a strategy to deal with existing differences between current resources and short-and long-term staffing needs. **(82–91)**	Agreed. A comprehensive human resource plan will be developed and implemented, reflecting current and future human resource needs and supporting the Department's strategic plan. Strategies will be developed to address gaps, between current resources and short-and long-term staffing needs, where identified.
99. The Department of Education should work with the Property Management Division to develop a long-term facility plan that takes into account the age, capacity, and location of facilities and student enrolment trends. **(93–98)**	Agreed. The Department partners with Property Management Division (PMD) of the Department of Highways and Public Works on all facility infrastructure issues. PMD undertakes ongoing facility condition assessments and provides annual recommendations for capital maintenance improvements. The Yukon Department of Education and PMD work together to coordinate these annual capital maintenance plans. This process encompasses only a two-to three-year planning horizon.
103. The Department of Education should take the appropriate steps to ensure that teaching staff are evaluated on a timely basis, as required by the Education Act, the Education Labour Relations Act, and departmental policies. **(100–102)**	Agreed. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that teachers are evaluated or participate in Growth Plans by June 2011.

Recommendation	Response
108. The Department of Education should work with the Property Management Division of the Department of Public Works and Highways to conduct regular and comprehensive facility audits to ensure that major building deficiencies are identified. The audits should address environmental, health, and safety issues, as needed. **(104–107)**	Agreed. The Property Management Division is undergoing a business process redesign, and among its key goals is the improvement of the Division's building audit function and the development of comprehensive service level agreements. In the interim, the Department of Education is undertaking independent assessments of all schools, on a system-by-system basis—roof audits have just been completed and structural/seismic and energy-management assessments are scheduled for the 2009–10 fiscal year. The Department of Education will incorporate the results of building audits into the risk-management plan as the Department develops it.